

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 210546

FROM UNA

FOL RPT KABUL 6668 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO TEHRAN, ISLAMABAD,
NEW DELHI, MOSCOW, PEKING, CINCPAC & CINCEUR DTD 17 AUG 78

QUOTE: S E C R E T KABUL 6668

TAGS: PINS, PINR, AF
CINCPAC: FOR POLAD
CINCEUR: FOR POLAD

1. RADIO AFGHANISTAN ANNOUNCED THE EVENING OF AUGUST 17 THAT
DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL ABDUL QADER, CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF
GENERAL SHAHPOOR, AND DR. MIR ALI AKBAR (CHIEF OF JAMHURIAT HOSPITAL)
HAVE BEEN ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED IMPLICATION IN A PLOT AGAINST THE
REGIME. ADDITIONALLY, CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL
AND PRIME MINISTER NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI HAS BEEN NAMED MINISTER OF
DEFENSE AND WILL BE ASSISTED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN

THESE DECISIONS WERE TAKEN ON AUGUST 17 BY THE POLITBURO, OF THE
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) ACCORDING TO THE
RADIO AFGHANISTAN ANNOUNCEMENT.

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2. COMMENT. GENERAL QADER HAS GENERALLY BEEN CONSIDERED AS MORE
NATIONALISTIC THAN MOST OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS REGIME'S
LEADERSHIP, AND HE REPORTEDLY RESENTED AND RESISTED THE EXTENT OF
THE SOVIET INTRUSION INTO THE AFGHAN MILITARY. OUR INITIAL
ANALYSIS OF THESE EVENTS SUGGESTS THAT THE REGIME'S MOVE AGAINST HIM
REPRESESTS A CALCULATED GAMBLE THAT TARAKI AND HIS SUPPORTERS
CAN WITHSTAND WHATEVER CHALLENGE THE RANK AND FILE MILITARY MAY

MOUNT IN RESPONSE TO THE SACKING OF A KEY MILITARY LEADER OF THE APRIL REVOLUTION (QADER DELIVERED THE AIR FORCE IN THE OVERTHROW OF FORMER PRESIDENT DAOUD).

3. THESE MILITARY LEADERS MAY, IN FACT, HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN AN ANTI-REGIME PLOT WHICH THE REGIME MAY HAVE PERCEIVED AS A GENUINE AND SERIOUS THREAT. OTHER MEMBERS OF SUCH A GROUP MAY DECIDE TO MAKE THEIR MOVE SOON, BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, WITHOUT LEADERSHIP THEY MAY DECIDE THAT THE EFFORT WOULD BE USELESS.

4. FOR SEVERAL DAYS THE RUMOR HAS BEEN MAKING THE ROUNDS THAT TARAKI MADE A BRIEF TRIP TO MOSCOW SOMETIME BETWEEN AUGUST 10 AND 14 IN ORDER TO CONSULT THE SOVIETS ON INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS. THIS THESIS IS ONE THAT HAS BEEN REPEATED TO US BY OUR CHINESE COLLEAGUES HERE, WHO HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY BELIEVE IT. IF IT IS CONFIRMED THAT TARAKI DID TRAVEL TO MOSCOW IT MUST SURELY HAVE BEEN TO CONSULT ON THE REMOVAL OF QADER.

5. THROUGHOUT TODAY (AUGUST 17) THE MILITARY FORCES IN KABUL HAVE APPEARED TO BE ON A SLIGHTLY HIGHER STATE OF ALERT, BUT AT THE MOMENT THE CITY REMAINS QUIET AND WE HAVE NOT YET HEARD ANY EVIDENCE OF ANY VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, TANKS AT RADIO AFGHANISTAN NEAR THE EMBASSY ARE REPORTELY OCCUPIED BY CREWS AS OF 10 P.M.

SIGCEN NOTE: MCN'S WILL BE FURNISHED NEXT OOB. UNQUOTE VANCE

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